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Hugh E. Willis, Former Faculty Member, Dies at 91

Leon H. Wallace

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INDIANA UNIVERSITY
Maurer School of Law
Bloomington

Hugh E. Willis, Former Faculty Member, Dies At 91

This memorial resolution for Prof. Hugh E. Willis was written for the Faculty Council of Indiana University by Prof. Leon H. Wallace. An abridged version follows.

In the death on January 25, 1967, of Hugh Evander Willis, in Orlando, Florida, in his ninety-second year, the legal profession lost one of its finest teachers and scholars of another era.

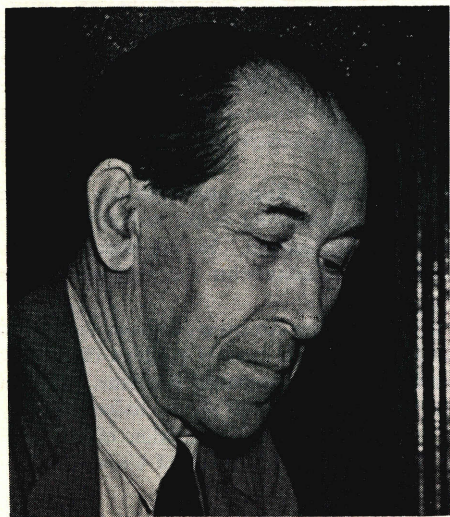
Hugh Willis was born and spent his early boyhood at Straton, Vermont. When his parents moved to Yankton, South Dakota, he completed his grade school and high school training in the local schools and then attended Yankton College, from which he received his Bachelor and Master of Arts Degrees.

He then enrolled in the University of Minnesota Law School and subsequently earned both Bachelor of Laws and Master of Laws degrees. On receiving his Master's Degree he was invited to join the law faculty of the University of Minnesota where he taught for nine years. During this period he married Esther DeCoster. Mrs. Willis died December 30, 1955. After leaving Minnesota, Professor Willis served two years as Dean and Professor of Law at Southwestern University in Los Angeles, followed by five years as Dean and Professor of Law at the University of North Dakota. From there he came to Indiana University School of Law where he taught continuously until his retirement in 1945, having served as Acting Dean during the academic year 1942-43.

Hugh Willis was a teacher whose goal was not only to teach but more importantly to inspire in his students a desire to learn for themselves, and to reach out beyond the frontiers of the immediate course involved. He demanded excellence and most of his students were subsequently grateful that he had. Although many of his new students were awed by him, they left with a genuine affection for him.

Professor Willis worked with bar associations for many years on the reform of legal procedure and the formulation of higher standards for admission to practice. His "Introduction to Anglo-American Law" initiated many a beginning law student into the history and philosophy of the law. His treatise, "Constitutional Law of the United States," has been the leading authority on constitutional interpretation in the courts of India.

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Prof. Hugh E. Willis, as he looked while a faculty member of the Indiana University School of Law.

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Professor Willis also was active in the formulation of the American Law Institute's Restatement of the Law of Contracts, and prepared the Indiana annotations for that Restatement.

Aside from the law, Professor Willis' other great interest was in the game of golf and for several years he served as coach of the University's golf team.

After Mrs. Willis' death, Professor Willis left Bloomington and spent some years in Virginia and later in Florida. For a time he returned to the campus and lived in the Union Building, but spent the last years of his life in Winter Park and Orlando, Florida.